

Remarks:

The above amendments and these remarks are responsive to the final Office action dated April 17, 2006 and support the accompanying Request for Continued Examination as a submission under 37 C.F.R. § 1.114.

Prior to entry of this Amendment, claims 1, 3-4, and 7-25 remained pending in the present application. Claims 1, 3-4, and 7-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) based on U.S. Patent No. 6,859,832 to Gecht et al. ("Gecht"). Claims 15-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gecht. Applicants respectfully disagree, but have amended claims 1 and 8 to make the claims more clear, and claims 3 and 13 to conform to claims 1 and 8.

In view of the foregoing amendments, and the remarks below, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims.

Request for Continued Examination

Applicant is submitting herewith a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) under 37 C.F.R. § 1.114. This Request complies with the requirements of 37 C.F.R. § 1.114. In particular:

- (i) Prosecution in the application is closed, since the last action was a final Office action under 37 C.F.R. § 1.313.
- (ii) The Request is accompanied by a submission as set forth at 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c), specifically, the accompanying amendment and remarks.
- (iii) The Request is accompanied by the fee set forth at 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(e).

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Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests grant of this Request for Continued Examination.

Rejections under 35 USC § 102(e)

As noted above, claims 1, 3-4 and 7-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) based on Gecht.

Gecht et al. discloses methods and systems for providing printing services over a communications network so as to enable a user to obtain print jobs at an unspecified location which may be remote from the source of the print job. The systems disclosed in Gecht employ: (a) a print job source connected to a communications network; (b) a spooling server connected to the communications network for storing print jobs received from the print job source; and (c) a printer polling device connected to the communications network, which may be remotely located relative to the print job source, for retrieving print jobs from the spooling server, and printing them on an associated printer. For example, as shown in Fig. 4 below, the system can be used to send a print job from a network computer at a first location (i.e. print job source 10 at first local area network 20) to the spooling server 50 for storage, and to later use another network computer at a second location (i.e. the printer polling device 100 at second local area network 80) to retrieve the print job from the spooling server 50 and print the job on a destination printer 120 associated with the printer polling device.

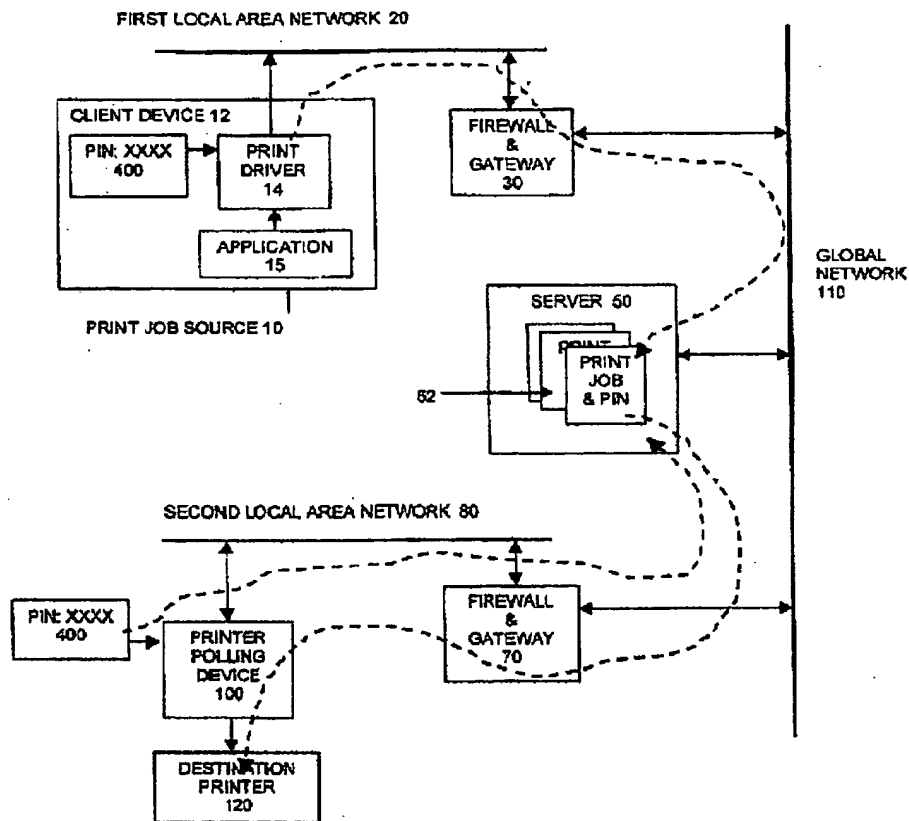


FIG. 4

To ensure that only an authorized user uses a polling device 100 to retrieve a print job stored on the spooling server 50, the system disclosed in Gecht stores print jobs on the spooling server according to a personal identification number (PIN). (Col. 10, line 5 to col. 11, line 50). As shown in Fig. 4 above, a user enters a selected PIN 400 at the print job source 10 when they send a print job, and the print job and PIN 52 are forwarded to the spooling server 50, where the print job is stored according to the PIN. The print job is thereafter accessible to users accessing the spooling server

from any printer polling device 100, provided the spooling server 50 successfully authenticates the user by verifying that they have reentered a matching PIN at the printer polling device 100.

Fig. 5 below shows the authentication process disclosed by Gecht. (See col. 10, line 60 to col. 11, line 50). In order for a user to print documents using a printer polling device 100, Gecht discloses that the spooling server 50 needs to verify that the correct user is attempting to print the document. The spooling server 50 verifies this information by indirectly comparing the PIN associated with the print job stored in the spooling server to a PIN entered at the printer polling device 100 by a user attempting to access and print the document. Specifically, for any print job stored by the spooling server 50, the spooling server generates a random code (i.e. random challenge string 350) which is sent to the printer polling device 100. This code is encrypted at 155 by an encryption key 152 that is in part generated by the PIN entered at the printer polling device 100. The encrypted code is sent back to the spooling server 50, where it is decrypted at 355 by an encryption key 362 in part generated by the PIN originally entered by the user at the print job source, and stored at the spooling server (as discussed above). If the PIN entered at the printer polling device 100 is the same as the PIN entered at the print job source and stored at the spooling server, then the decrypted response 358 matches the random challenge string 350, and the user is thereby authenticated. Upon authentication, the print job requested by the user of printer polling device 100 is sent to a printer associated with the printer polling device (as discussed above).

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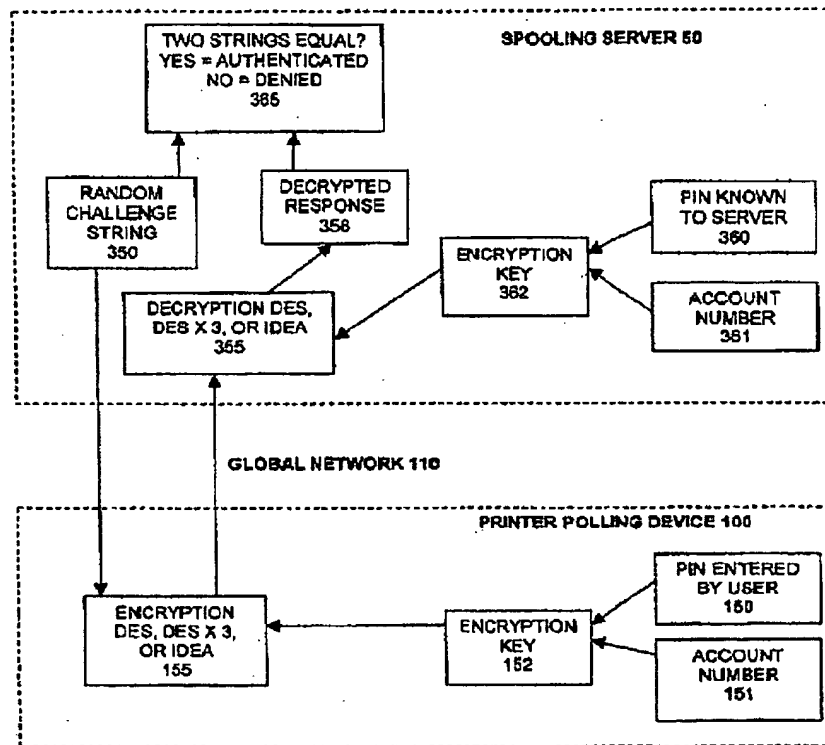


FIG. 5

Gecht does not disclose or suggest sending an authorization code (or a PIN for that matter) from the spooling server to the client computer that subsequently sends the print job associated with the authorization code back to the spooling server. Rather, Gecht discloses a system that enables a user to first send and store a print job, along with a user-selected PIN, from the client computer to the spooling server via a network. The Gecht system then enables a user to thereafter retrieve the print job from any remote printer polling device connected to the network, provided the user attempting to

access the stored print job enters a PIN number that matches the PIN associated with the stored print job. The spooling server does not direct authorization of the user by providing an authorization code, and control (i.e. selection of a particular PIN) remains with the user at all times.

As amended, claim 1 recites:

A method comprising:
sending an authorization code to a client computer from a monitoring device remotely located relative to the client computer;
subsequently sending a print job with the authorization code from the client computer to the remote monitoring device;
the remote monitoring device checking whether the authorization code is valid;
enabling printing of the print job upon determining that the authorization code is valid; and
disabling printing of the print job upon determining that the authorization code is invalid.

Gecht does not disclose "sending an authorization code to a client computer from a monitoring device remotely located relative to the client computer" and "subsequently sending a print job with the authorization code from the client computer to the remote monitoring device." According to Gecht, the user enters a PIN at the client computer, and again at the printer polling device associated with a printer when printing is to occur. The PIN is never sent from a remote monitoring device, or any other remote network device, to the client computer that generates the print job.

Accordingly, claim 1 is not anticipated by Gecht, and the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) should be withdrawn. Further, claims 3, 4 and 7 depend from claim 1, and are therefore distinguishable from Gecht for at least the same reasons as claim 1. The rejection of claims 3, 4 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) based on Gecht thus also should be withdrawn.

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As amended, claim 8 recites:

In a public computer service center where multiple computers can be connected to a communications link associated with the service center, a method comprising:

- creating a request to log on to the communications link;
- sending an authorization code from a host located on the communications link to a client computer located on the communications link;
- subsequently sending a print job from the client computer to a printer with the authorization code embedded in a header of the print job; and
- checking whether the authorization code is valid, prior to enabling or disabling the print job from printing.

As noted generally with respect to claim 1, Gecht does not disclose "sending an authorization code from a host located on [a] communications link to a client computer located on the communications link" and "subsequently sending a print job from the client computer to a printer with the authorization code embedded in a header of the print job." According to Gecht, the user enters a PIN at the client computer, and again at the printer polling device associated with a printer when printing is to occur. The PIN is never sent from a monitoring device, or any other network device, to the client computer that generates the print job.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 8 is not anticipated by Gecht, and the rejection of claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) should be withdrawn. Further, claims 9-14 depend from claim 8, and are therefore distinguishable from Gecht for at least the same reasons as claim 8. The rejection of claims 19-14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) based on Gecht thus also should be withdrawn.

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Rejections under 35 USC § 103(a)

As noted above, claims 15-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Gecht.

Claim 15 recites:

A system comprising:
a communications link;
a monitoring device attached to the communications link; and
an agent, configured to provide an interface between a computer and the communications link, wherein the agent receives an authorization code from the monitoring device, and assigns the authorization code to a print job sent by the computer,
wherein the monitoring device is configured to receive the print job and verify whether the authorization code is valid.

As shown in Fig. 11 below, Gecht discloses an embodiment of the system that utilizes an agent program 200 installed on a client device 12. (See Col. 13, lines 21 to col. 14, line 16). The agent program 200 sends information about the contents of directory 204 to the spooling server 50, where the information can be accessed by someone using printer polling device 100. The agent program 200 thereby enables someone using the printer polling device 100 to select and print a document stored in directory 204 by sending a print request 207 to the client device 12 via spooling server 50. Specifically, spooling server 50 receives request 207 from the printer polling device, and sends the request 207 to agent program 200. Agent program 200 in turn responds to the reception of request 207 by sending a print job 11 to the printer polling device 100 via the spooling server 50. Gecht fails to disclose or suggest an agent that receives an authorization code from the spooling server, or any other network device. Gecht also fails to disclose or suggest an agent that "assigns" an authorization code, or any other data, to the print job.

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In the Office action, the Examiner recognized that Gecht fails to disclose an agent that receives an authorization code from the monitoring device. (See Page 8 of the Office action). However, the Examiner asserted that the agent program receives a name of a document or subdirectory, and therefore it would have been obvious to receive an authorization code as well, "since the code indicates where print jobs are stored within the server." (See Page 9 of the Office action).

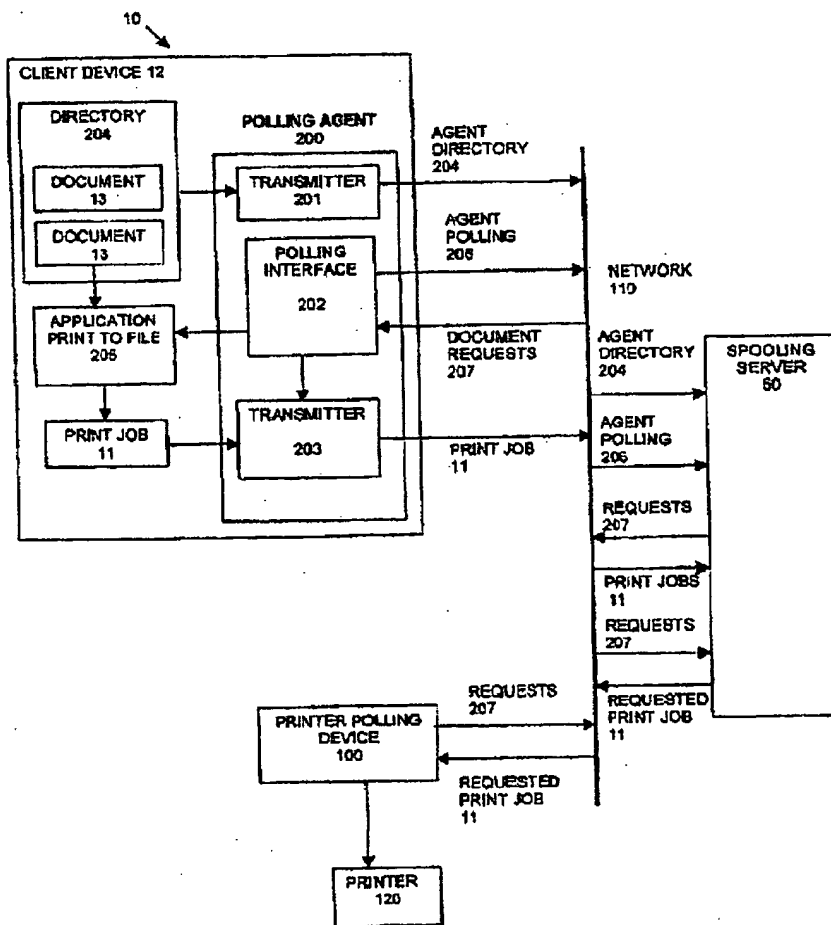


FIG.11

The Examiner has failed to establish a prima facie case of obviousness. To establish a prima facie case of obviousness, the Examiner must show that: (1) there is a suggestion or motivation, either in the art itself or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify Gecht; (2) that there is some reasonable expectation of success; and (3) that the modified reference teaches each and every element of the claim. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination must be found in the prior art, not in applicant's disclosure. *In re Vaack*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

The Examiner has failed to show a proper suggestion or motivation to modify Gecht, because the modification would change the principle of operation of the agent program. Specifically, the modification would require that the agent program not only receive an authorization code, but would also assign the code to a print job. As discussed above, the agent program disclosed in Gecht does not assign any information to the print job. Rather, it merely "make(s) the contents of some or all of the directories 204 on the client device 12 available to the spooling server 50." (Col. 13 lines 21-24). Thus, modifying the agent program to assign any information to a print job, namely an authorization code, would improperly change the principle of operation of the agent program.

In fact, Gecht teaches away from modifying the agent program so as to assign an authorization code to a print job, because the modification renders the system unsatisfactory for its intended purpose. Referring again to Fig. 11 above, the only time any data is received by the agent program 200 from the spooling device 50, is during a

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request 207 that was originally sent by printer polling device 100 via spooling server 50. Thus, the authorization code assigned by a modified agent program to a print job 11 would have to be either (a) selected by the user of printer polling device 207, (b) generated by the spooling server 50 after the request 207 was sent; or (c) generated by the agent program 200 after the request 207 was sent. If the user of printer polling device 100 selected and entered the authorization code, it would obviate the need for an authentication process altogether. If the spooling server 50 or polling agent 200 generated the authorization code after a user of the printer polling device 100 sent the request 207, then the user of the printer polling device 100 would not be privy to the authorization code, and would be unable to successfully execute the authorization process. In each case, the authentication process could not be performed, thus rendering the system inoperable for its intended purpose.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 15 is not obvious over Gecht, and the rejection of claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn. Correspondingly, inasmuch as claims 16-25 depend from claim 15, such claims are distinguishable from Gecht for at least the same reasons as claim 15. The rejection of claims 16-25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Gecht thus also should be withdrawn.

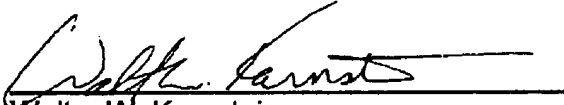
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Conclusion

Applicants believe that this application is now in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to Examiner J. Pokrzywa, Group Art Unit 2625, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, at facsimile number (571) 273-8300 on June 13, 2006.



Christie A. Doolittle

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